DEMOCRATIC

GERMAN REPORT

VOL. II NO. 6 MARCH 13th 1953 Price: 15 Pf., 5 c., 3 d

STALIN FREED GERMANS FROM FASCISM

In a mourning session held today the Government of the German Democratic Republic heard with the deepest emotion the news that Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, had passed away.

The Government and the entire population of the German Democratic Republic, together with all progressive and peace-loving persons in the whole of Germany, mourn deeply for Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, the great friend of the German people and the great pioneer of world peace.

Under the inspired leadership of Generalissimo Stalin, the heroic Soviet Army destroyed Hitlerite fascism, and thus freed the German people from the yoke of fascism.

Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin fought during the Second World War against the intention of the imperialists to partition Germany. He fought for the creation of a united, democratic, peace-loving and independent Germany, and showed the way to achieve this goal through the resolutions of the Potsdam Conference.

He thus laid the foundations for the destruction of the trusts and of Junkerdom, and the foundations for a broad democratic development in what was then the Soviet Occupation Zone of Germany. After the actions of the western powers had caused the partitioning of Germany he made possible the formation of the German Democratic Republic.

Thanks to the continual great help given by the mighty Soviet Union, and by our friend Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin personally, the German Democratic Republic was able to proceed to lay the foundations for the construction of Socialism on the basis of the people's property which had been created.

In their fight for unity and a peace treaty, the German people were so encouraged and strengthened by the foreign policy pursued by Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin that they were able to begin with the formation of a great national resistance movement against the American imperialist policy of war treaties.

The unceasing endeavours of the Government of the Soviet Union, led by Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin, to bring about Four Power negotiations for the peaceful solution of the German problem have anchored for ever in the hearts of all patriotic Germans a deep feeling of unshakeable friendship for the peoples of the Soviet Union.

In the name of all German patriots the Government of the German Democratic Republic requests the Council of Ministers of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics to accept its deeply-felt sympathy on the passing away of Stalin, that great and wise man, the beloved leader of all workers.

The German Democratic Republic and all honest patriots and friends of peace in Germany assure the peoples of the Soviet Union of their unshakeable friendship, and their firm resolve to fight untiringly for the cause of peace, democracy and Socialism in Joseph Vissarionovich Stalin's spirit.

Message addressed by the Cabinet of the German Democratic Republic to the Council of Ministers of the Union of Socialist Soviet Republics, March 6th 1953

DEMOCRATIC GERMANY'S FRIEND

During the most trying days of the war, when Hitler's troops had driven deep into the Soviet Union, Stalin made a historic declaration on Germany:

"The foreign press sometimes alleges that the Red Army has the aim of exterminating the German people and destroying the German state. That is naturally stupid chatter, and an idiotic slander on the Red Army...

"It would be ridiculous to equate the Hitler clique with the German people, or with the German state. The lessons of history teach us that Hitlers come and go, but that the German people, the German state, remain.

"The Red Army is strong because it nurtures no hatred against other people, including the German people."

(Order of the Day, February 23rd 1942)

Soon after the war ended, Stalin was one of the signatories of the Potsdam Declaration, which, after detailing measures to destroy German militarism, stated:

"It is not the intention of the allies to destroy or enslave the German people. It is the intention of the allies that the German people be given the opportunity to prepare for the eventual reconstruction of their life on a democratic and peaceful basis."

(Potsdam Conference Report, August 2nd 1945)

This declaration was signed by President Truman for the U.S. and Prime Minister Attlee for Britain, but these countries soon abandoned even the pretence of adhesion to the declaration, while the Soviet Union, headed by Stalin, made it the guiding rule for the policy to be pursued in Germany.

Through the immediate post-war years of uncertainty on the future of Germany, Joseph Stalin never tired of repeating his concern that Germany should be democratised:

"Not only the economic but also the political unity of Germany should be restored... The remnants of fascism in Germany should be extirpated, and she should be democratised to the end."

(Interview with the United Press, October 28th 1946)

Despite the efforts of Stalin and the Soviet Union, the western powers proceeded to split Germany, instead of restoring unity, and in October 1949 the German Demcocratic Republic was established in what had hitherto been the Soviet Occupation Zone.

On the formation of the Republic, Stalin sent a message of encouragement and congratulation to President Wilhelm Pieck and Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl:

"The formation of the German democratic peace-loving Republic is a turning point in the history of Europe. There can be no doubt that the existence of a peace-loving democratic Germany side by side with the existence of the peace-loving Soviet Union excludes the possibility of new wars in Europe, puts an end to bloodshed in Europe, and makes impossible the enslavement of the European countries by the imperialists.

"The experience of the recent war showed that the biggest sacrifices were borne by the German and Soviet peoples, and that these two peoples possess the greatest potential in Europe for accomplishing great actions of world importance. If they display determination to fight for peace, straining their energies to the same extent as they did to wage war, peace in Europe may be considered as secured.

"By thus laying the foundation for a unified and peace-loving Germany, you simultaneously perform a great deed for the whole of Europe, guaranteeing her lasting peace. In advancing along this road and promoting the cause of peace you will find sympathy and active support among all peoples of the world, including the American, British, French, Polish, Czechoslovak and Italian peoples.

"I wish you success on this new and glorious road.

"May unified, independent, democratic, peace-loving Germany live and prosper!"

(October 13th 1949)

A few months later, Stalin gave further very concrete expression of his friendship and his readiness to help the young German Democratic Republic:

"The Soviet Government has examined the request of the German Democratic Republic for the reduction of the sum paid by Germany on account of reparations. In doing so, the Soviet Government has taken into consideration the fact that the German Democratic Republic is conscientiously and regularly fulfilling its reparations obligations... Guided by the desire to facilitate the efforts of the German people for the restoration and development of the national economy of Germany, and taking into account the friendly relations which have been established between the Soviet Union and the German Democratic Republic, the Soviet Government, in agreement with the Polish Republic, has taken the decision to reduce the sum of reparations payments still to be paid by 50 percent."

(Letter to Prime Minister Otto Grotewohl, May 15th 1950)

An ever-growing proportion of the German people realises that Stalin freed them from the bonds of Hitlerism, that he has consistently supported the creation of a unified peace-loving Germany, and that he took the lead in the great world movement for peace. They mourn his loss as the loss of a real friend, and they will act on the words he uttered on February 16th 1951:

"Peace will be preserved and strengthened if the peoples take into their own hands the cause of the preservation of peace, and defend it to the end."

West German Workers Honour Stalin

West German building workers employed in building army barracks at Lahr, American Zone, downed tools for five minutes as a sign of mourning when the news of Stalin's death became known.

In many other parts of West Germany there were spontaneous work stoppages in honour of the man who had played the major part in liberating the German people from Hitler. In the Ruhr mining area, Hamburg, and other industrial centres, there were imposing mourning meetings and demonstrations.

Reports from many parts of West Germany stressed the number of Social Democrats and workers belonging to no party who took part in these celebrations. From several centres came reports of a great increase in the number of workers applying to join the Communist Party.

BUILDERS OF STALIN ALLEE PAY THEIR TRIBUTE

Thousands Join Socialist Unity Party

The builders of Berlin's Stalin Allee, concrete expression of the peaceful reconstruction policy in the German Democratic Republic, headed the mourning march of hundreds of thousands in Berlin on March 10th, the day on which Generalissimo Stalin was borne to his last resting place.

Amongst the hundreds of bricklayers, carpenters and other building workers who filed past the statue of Stalin in the East Berlin street which bears his name were many who had just applied to join the Socialist Unity Party.

From all parts of East Germany came similar reports: thousands of workers, young and old, who felt that they had lost a friend when Stalin died, applied to join the Socialist Unity as a pledge that they wished to carry on the fight for peace, progress and Socialism which Stalin had headed.

In a message of condolences addressed to the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany stated:

"The German people are indebted to Lenin and Stalin, who restored the true content and further developed the teachings of Marx and Engels, the greatest intellectual heritage of the German nation.

"The death of J. V. Stalin, which fills the whole of progressive humanity with deep sorrow, is thus a particularly heavy loss for the German nation, which is struggling to give its life a new form.

"The Central Committee of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany is convinced that the population of the German Democratic Republic will redouble their efforts to reinforce the unbreakable bonds of friendship with the great Soviet people, who head the world peace camp.

"The workers of our Republic will strengthen still more the people's democratic foundations of our state, and construct the foundations of Socialism. They will be still more vigilant to prevent the disruptive attacks made by our enemies, and will further strengthen the state power of the German Democratic Republic.

"The people of the German Democratic Republic will devote still more energy to the struggle for the maintenance of peace and the restoration of the unity of Germany."

ONE YEAR AGO STALIN INITIATED PEACE TREATY MOVE

As they were mourning Stalin's death, the people of Germany recalled that just one year ago, on March 10th 1952, the Soviet Government, then headed by Premier J. V. Stalin, had made far-reaching proposals for the speedy conclusion of a peace treaty with Germany.

The proposal made by the Soviet Government was that Britain, France, U. S. A. and the Soviet Union should immediately get to work on a draft peace treaty with Germany, which would then be presented to an International Peace Conference.

An all-German government should take part in drawing up the treaty, the proposal stated. To this end the four powers in Germany should take steps to speed-up the establishment of an all-German government in accordance with the wishes of the German people.

Main points of the preliminary draft treaty submitted by the Soviet Union for consideration were:

1. **Germany to be restored as a unified state.**
2. **All occupation troops to be withdrawn within one year, and war bases liquidated.**
3. **German people guaranteed all human rights including freedom of speech, press, religion and assembly.**
4. **Anti-democratic organisations to be banned.**
5. **Equal chances for former soldiers and former nazis, excepting war criminals, in the work of rebuilding Germany.**
6. **Ban on alliances directed against those states which fought Hitler.**

The Soviet proposals were turned down by the western powers, who were intent upon turning West Germany into a basis of operations against the east, with the aid of a new West German Wehrmacht.

West Berlin Police Haul Down Mourning Flags

West Berlin police toured the streets in squad cars following the news of Stalin's death, tearing down red flags and German flags which had been hoisted at half-mast or draped with crepe as a sign of mourning.

Former nazi officers, who now hold prominent positions on the police force, ordered their men to take immediate action against any sign of mourning in workers' districts.

On Monday March 9th, the day of Stalin's funeral, more than 20 cases were reported of police interference with the flying of mourning flags. In other cases gangs of rowdies tore down such flags and burned them under police protection.

Building Democratic Germany (2)

INDUSTRY REALLY OWNED BY PEOPLE

This article is one of a series dealing with various aspects of life and work in the German Democratic Republic since 1945. We should be glad to receive suggestions from readers for future articles in the series.

Immediately after the end of the war in 1945, the Soviet Occupation Authorities in East Germany ordered the sequestration of the factories, pits and bank accounts of the war criminals and the active nazis.

Since heavy industry in Germany had been one of the main supporters of the Hitler regime, this meant that the main part of heavy industry was removed at one stroke from the possession of the big business bosses like Krupp, and monopolies like I G Farben.

For an interim period the sequestrated works were placed under custodianship, and the workers were encouraged in every way to get production going again.

Vote on Factories

In April 1946, the Communist Party and the Social Democratic Party in East Germany, which had learned from the nazi period that they must fight together, joined to form the Socialist Unity Party, and on the proposal of the newly formed party a plebiscite on the question of nationalisation was held in Saxony, the main industrial province.

A great majority of the votes — 78 percent — were in favour of national ownership of the factories and mines, and in the following period laws on the nationalisation of the sequestered factories were passed in the provincial parliaments in all parts of East Germany.

It is interesting to note that the enthusiasm for national ownership was not by any means confined to East Germany. The Parliament in Hessen, in the American Zone, also passed a far-reaching nationalisation law, which was endorsed by 70 percent of the voters in a public plebiscite. The American authorities killed the measure.

In the Ruhr, in the British Zone, public opinion in favour of nationalisation, and against the return of heavy industry to men like Krupp and Thyssen was so strong that British Military Governor General Sir Brian Robertson was forced to state on April 7th 1948: "The British Government will never allow German industry to return to its former owners." When the Provincial Parliament went ahead and passed a nationalisation law on August 6th 1948, General Robertson promptly vetoed it.

The contrast in East Germany was striking. Here the Soviet Authorities stood firmly by the Potsdam Declaration, which had called for the destruction of the monoplies which had been the main supporters of Hitler' war of aggression.

The Soviet authorities gave the inexperienced new directors of the new nationally owned factories every assistance, helped them to get the factories going again, and gave invaluable aid in preventing the attempts at sabotage made by the old owners.

In the first few months and even years after the end of the war the chaos was indescribable, and the order of the day was to get production — almost any production, with the exception of war production — going again.

The workers in the nationally owned sector, proud of the works which were now theirs, got going again with a will. In 1946 less than 20 percent of the total production in East Germany came from the nationally owned and cooperatively owned sctor, but the proportion rose steadily to 43 percent in 1948.

Great Advance

By 1950 nationally owned factories and pits were turning out 73 percent of the total production, and the latest figures show that in 1952 the proportion had reached 81 percent.

In the period between 1948, when economic recovery was only just beginning, and 1953, when production is soaring above the pre-war figures, there has been a great advance.

The period of haphazard production has long passed. In 1948 the Government, acting on a proposal made by the Socialist Unity Party, drew up the Two Year Plan for the years 1949 and 1950.

Main aim of the plan was to remove the last traces of war-damage and to get industry and agriculture back to the pre-war levels of production. Despite the difficulties imposed by the partitioning of German by the western powers, which meant that many raw materials, particularly iron, were in acutely short supply in East Germany, the plan was triumphantly fulfilled ahead of schedule

At the end of 1950, industrial production was three percent higher than it had been before the war, and the groundwork had been laid for the great Five Year Plan.

Under the Five Year Plan, which is due for completion at the end of 1955, industrial production is to rise by over 92 percent to about double the pre-war figure. This huge increase will be accompanied by a 20 percent rise in industrial wages, a 60 percent increase in labour productivity, and a 26 percent cut in production costs.

High Targets

When the plan was announced these targets seemed almost unattainable to many, but in the meantime the annual reports on plan progress show that they are by no means impossibly high.

In the first two years of the plan, for instance, industrial production had already risen 43 percent above the 1950 level, and in 1952 alone, average wages rose by 6 percent.

During the course of 1952 there was a further important development in the whole basis of industrial development in East Germany.

This was the announcement by the Socialist Unity Party on July 9th, that the time was now ripe for laying the foundations of Socialism in the German Democratic Republic. "The creation of the economic basis of Socialism demands in the first place the increase of Socialist property through the further development of the nationally owned sector of the economy, which has assumed a Socialist character" stated Deputy Prime Minister Walter Ulbricht making the announcement.

So to-day the workers own the factories and the pits which once belonged to big business. They are running these industries for their own benefit, to build Socialism in a democratic Germany which will never again menace the world as an aggressor.

"STOP RATIFICATION OF BONN TREATIES"

East and West Join in Call

The events of 1952 have shown that it is possible to prevent the ratification of the Bonn Treaties and the formation of a West German Wehrmacht, representatives of East and West Germany, meeting in Berlin at the beginning of March, declared.

The meeting was held by delegates who had attended the International Conference for a Peaceful Solution of the German Problem held in Berlin in November 1952.

The delegates, representing all sections of the peace movement in both halves of Germany, appealed to the East and West German Parliaments to do everything to prevent the treaties being ratified. The appeal stated in part:

"The aggressive declarations made by the Eisenhower government have made the danger of a war on German soil apparent to everyone. Adenauer's government intends to make the attempt to drive the third reading of the ratification instrument through the West German Parliament this month (March).

"For this purpose all weapons of propaganda are being used to produce a psychosis of mistrust and hatred, in order to prevent understanding between the Germans in the East and the West of our homeland.

"All methods of cold war are being used to suppress the people's opposition to the treaties.

"The ratification of the Bonn and Paris Treaties must be prevented. The events of 1952 have proved that this ratification can be prevented.

"The members of the West German Parliament must be made to realise that the ratification of the treaties would deepen the split in Germany, would place West Germany at the disposal of American military policy, and convert it into the deployment area for a new war.

"We appeal to the members of the West German Parliament to say no to the fate which threatens our people.

"We appeal to the members of the Parliament of the German Democratic Republic to continue their previous efforts to reach all-German understanding, and to take new steps to help our people."

Addressing the meeting, Franz Dahlem, a member of the Politburo of the Socialist Unity Party in East Germany, gave details of the way in which "cold war lies" were being used against the German Democratic Republic.

The western propaganda agencies were using every effort to cause uneasiness amongst the population of East Germany, and particularly amongst the peasants, he said. Peasants with large holdings were being instructed to commit acts of sabotage, and the number of people fleeing to the West was being enormously exaggerated by the western propagandists. Young Christians were being misused in provocative acts, aimed at creating tension between the church and the government, Franz Dahlem stated.

In West Germany propaganda was being spread to the effect that there was no point in working for German unity, since the Government of the German Democratic Republic had changed its policy in this respect.

"This is simply not true" Franz Dahlem stated. "The entire population of the German Democratic Republic, and their Government, give their support more strongly than ever to the peaceful, democratic re-unification of Germany."

MEN WHO FINANCED HITLER TO GET BACK THEIR MONEY

American and other international bankers who lent Hitler the money to prepare nazi Germany for war are to get their money back, — out of the pockets of the West German taxpayer.

Under the terms of an agreement signed in London February 27th by West Germany and USA, Britain, France and a number of other states, West Germany's taxpayers will have to pay off a debt of over three thousand million dollars which German big business incurred before and after the war.

The official "White Book on the Bonn War Treaty" issued by the East German Government late in 1952, has this to say about the debts which have now been recognised, amounting in all to nearly 14 thousand million marks:

"The debts under discussion ... are the credits amounting to thousands of millions which were extended to the German monopolies so that they could prepare their factories, pits and foundries for the second world war.

"There are, in addition, the debts contracted by West German finance capital since 1945 in the form of so-called American aid under the Marshall Plan. What was represented to the German people for years as 'generous American help' is now disclosed as a further means for the financial enslavement of West Germany by American finance capital."

The debt settlement was negotiated for West Germany by Hermann Abs, Director of the Reconstruction Bank. He was a very suitable man to acknowledge Hitler's debts, for here is what the U. S. Department of the Army had to say about him in spring 1945, in orientation pamphlet 31/110A:

"Hermann Abs, one of the leading German financiers, who has amassed huge sums under National Socialism."

The OMGUS Bulletin, issued by the U. S. Office of Military Government in Germany in November 1946 stated:

"Abs was the leading spirit of the villainous Deutsche Bank, which combined an unusual concentration of economic power with active collaboration in the criminal policies of the nazi regime. Abs ... devoted his entire attention to extending German domination throughout Europe."

RUSHING RATIFICATION

The West German Government announced that it intended to drive the final ratification of the Bonn Treaties through the West German Parliament on March 19th and 20th. The government spokesman stated that no regard would be paid to the fact that the West German Constitutional Court has not yet given a decision as to whether the treaties are constitutional or not.

200 Korean Children in East Germany

200 Korean children, largely war orphans, have arrived in the German Democratic Republic, where they will be able to continue their education in peace. Five of the children have served as partisans.

U.S. Plans Foreign Legion

The U. S. Department of the Army is working on plans to recruit hundreds of thousands of West Germans into the American Army, if the plans for a "European Army" break down, the West German news magazine "Spiegel" reported.

The magazine stated:

"Section G. V. of the U. S. General Staff, on the instructions of Lieutenent General Anthony C. McAuliffe, Deputy Chief of Staff, has worked out a new plan, which has been initialled by Defence Minister Charles E. Wilson and forwarded to the Armed Forces Committee of the House of Representatives.

"The plan proposes that the Army and the Air Force should establish special formations into which German recruits will be accepted. In the army units German recruits will be accepted up to two-thirds of total strength, and in the Air Force up to 50 percent of strength.

"It is proposed that these German recruits should serve for five years, should receive the same pay as U. S. personnel, and should have the same chances of promotion.

"These formations would be placed at the exclusive disposal of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Forces in Europe.

"The Army Chief of Staff recommended that Britain and France should also be urged to reorganise their forces on the same model."

Back to the Middle Ages

West Berlin Federal Court has ruled that traditional student duelling with heavy swords is legal.

Student duelling, known as the "Mensur", and extreme militarism and nationalism have always gone hand in hand. Prussian Officers were particularly proud of the duelling scars on their faces.

W. German Minister Calls for New Repressive Laws

The peace movement in West Germany is carrying on such a varied and intensive attack on the war preparations in West Germany that new legislation must be enacted to repress it, West German Minister of Justice Thomas Dehler threatened in an interview on February 27th.

"These attacks are undermining our state of order. In addition to new legislation, it is necessary to tighten up the existant controls" Dehler stated.

Our Own Baedeker

The Potsdam Agreement, signed by Attlee, Truman and Stalin, laid down that German militarism and nazism should be extirpated and the German people helped to create a democratic and peaceful life in a united country.

In direct breach of the Potsdam Agreement, the Western powers partitioned Germany. Today, in January 1953, Germany thus temporarily consists de facto of four parts:

1) The German Democratic Republic (former Soviet Zone or East Zone)

Area: 41,390 square miles. Population: 17,314,000 (1948). Capital: Berlin. President: Wilhelm Pieck. Prime Minister: Otto Grotewohl.

In the German Democratic Republic war criminals and nazi industrialists have been expropriated and their factories and estates taken over by the people, education has been democratized, all forms of militarism, fascism or racial hatred are strictly forbidden both by law and in practice, and a Five Year Plan covering both nationalised and private industry has brought sinking prices and rising wages. The goverment is composed of representatives of the five parties — Socialist Unity Party, Christian Democratic Union, Liberal Democratic Party, National Democratic Party and Democratic Peasant Party. All parties have declared their support for all-German free democratic elections to secure German unity.

2) The German Federal Republic (former British, American and French Zones or West Zones)

Area: 96,706 square miles. Population: 44,620,000 (1948). Capital: Bonn. President: Theodor Heuss. Chancellor: Konrad Adenauer.

In the German Federal Republic the bankers and industrialists who helped Hitler to power have kept their money and their factories. The goverment, with support from the occupation powers, plans to re-introduce conscription for a new German Wehrmacht in the near future, and large para-military organisations under the command of old nazi generals already exist. Progressive movements are persecuted, but new fascist parties are left undisturbed. The government is composed of representatives of the Christian Democratic, Free Democratic and German Parties. Influential members of all main parties have declared their support for all-German free democratic elections, but Dr. Adenauer, leader of the Christian Democratic Union, and Ollenhauer, leader of the opposition Social Democratic Party, have fiercely opposed the proposal.

3) The Democratic Sector of Berlin (former Soviet sector) has the same currency and basically the same laws and regulations as the surrounding German Democratic Republic. The administration of the Democratic Sector is headed by Lord Mayor Friedrich Ebert. The population is approximately one million.

4) West Berlin (British, American and French sectors) has the same currency and in the main the same laws as the German Federal Republic. Since the formation of the separatist West Berlin administration in 1948 this part of the city has suffered from a chronic economic crisis, with unemployment hovering steadily around 300,000 out of a population of some two million. Peace supporters are persecuted and militarism fostered as in West Germany. The West Berlin administration is headed by Ernst Reuter.

(Reprinted from GERMAN REPORT Vol I, No 1)

Democratic
GERMAN REPORT

Subscriptions rates: 4 marks, 8/- sterling $ 1.25 per annum or pro rata, postage paid.

Subscriptions may be paid at the following addresses:

Democratic Germany: At all post offices.

Britain: Collet's Subscription Dept, 40 Great Russell St., London W. C. 1

Holland: Pegasus Boekhandel. Leidsestraat 25, Amsterdam. (Fl. 2.50 annually).

Denmark: Land og Folks Boghandel, Bredgade 37, Copenhagen.

North and South America: National Guardian, 17 Murray St., New York 7, U. S. A.

Australasia: A. Keesing, G. P. O. Box No. 4886, Sydney, Australia.

China: Guozi Shudian, 38 Suchou Hutung, Peking.

Nigeria: Tenimasunwon, 6 Oroyinyin St., Lagos.

All other communications should be addressed to:

Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167 III, Berlin W 8, Germany.

All material in GERMAN REPORT may be freely reprinted. Voucher copies of reprints would be appreciated.

SUMMER TRIP TO SAXONY

By Dorothy M. Diamond

The writer of this delayed article is Honorary Secretary of the British Council for German Democracy, 49 King Edwards Gardens, London W. 3., an organisation which does valuable work in Britain, particularly in the fight against the remilitarisation of West Germany.

Two cardinal points stood out wherever we went in Saxony — the concern for the welfare of the people, and the concern for art and culture. Both seemed to be fundamental.

Dresden, so shattered by Allied bombs in February 1945, shows very clearly the concern for art and culture. Dresden has four Academies, one of which is for arts and another for music. In the city, students and sculptors, apprentices and architects are devoting their efforts to the rebuilding of the former treasures.

Restored Church

We saw the Catholic Hofkirche, which is being restored, and we spent a long time in the famous "Zwinger" palace and gardens, seeing the models of sculptures, reconstructed from tiny scraps of broken stone, set in plaster after recovery from the bomb-debris and now being used as patterns for new work. We talked with an elderly little stone-carver: "Three months it takes me, to carve one of these little angels", he said "but I have some pupils on it too — that girl over there, for instance — she's only 19, but she likes the job, and she's good at it".

Three months of a man's life — to replace a little stone angel smashed by an American bomb. Yes, they care about culture in Dresden!

The concern for ordinary people is, however, even more evident all over the country than the concern for artistic treasures.

New Flats

Dresden is building new workers' flats on the "bombed sites" — in Gruenaer Strasse we saw the 4-storey blocks, every flat with hot water, central heating and telephone, 340 of which were due for completion by the end of 1952; the rents are 34—48 marks monthly.

Parks and gardens are already laid out, as are children's playgrounds; the Young Pioneers have been given a wonderful house and grounds — with large rooms, great variety of tools and musical instruments, and pictures everywhere.

In Meissen we compared housing and social amenities, wages and holidays — in the countryside near Pirna they showed us a fine Polyclinic of 250 beds providing medical and dental services for the villages (they reckoned a 60 % reduction in T. B. locally since the war) — in Freiberg we visited the famous Technical Academy (possibly the first in the world — it was founded in 1750) and had very lively discussions with the mining and engineering students and their professors.

As we went through the countryside near Radeberg we were lucky enough to see one of the new giant combine-harvesters at work; twice the size of those made in the German Democratic Republic itself, 50 of these 4-metre-wide "Stalinez-4" harvesters had arrived from the Soviet Union in July, and had already saved thousands of hours of back-breaking work, as well as much grain.

Farmers Watch

The local people had come to watch (it was Sunday afternoon) and were as excited as we were; this specimen was "on the strength" of the Radeberg tractor station, and had already convinced some of the local farmers that their success in grain-farming would be greatly increased by amalgamating their small fields and working collectively. The wide wave of enthusiasm for collective-farming was one of the most noticeable features of the summer of 1952 in the German Democratic Republic.

From this chance encounter we went on to spend a wonderful afternoon among working people on holiday, in the famous "Saxon Switzerland" of Bad Schandau.

In Bad Schandau itself we were privileged to see a Trade Union Holiday Centre of which any country could boast; it is called "Peoples' Friendship", takes over 100 guests at a time, and costs them only 5 marks per day, the rest being made up by the trade unions, social insurance funds, and the State.

It is excellently furnished with games rooms, library, chess room, dance floor, restaurant and grounds; in our discussion with workers from the chemical industry here (Agfa, Leuna, etc.) which lasted till midnight we covered the widest fields of mutual interest — women in industry, the situation of youth, the problems of West Germany, and as the ever-recurring subject in all our discussions, the struggle to secure peace in the world.

Finally, one of our most permanent memories — a picture of the happy youth of Saxony, in a Pioneer camp in Einsiedel, near Chemnitz. The camp-leader is one of the most vital and delightful young women I have ever met — the camp itself, in tents and huts, was most orderly — but the life and spirit of the children was really outstanding.

Friendly Police

Everywhere was a feeling of international friendship; I, a foreigner, spoke a few words with one of the People's Police guarding the camp, and as we parted not only he, but also his huge Alsatian police-dog, — on duty — "shook hands" with me! (shades of the pre-war German police!).

The children in the camp sang song after song, spontaneously, for our entertainment. They introduced us to some of the 70 Greek orphans who are living with them until they can return to Greece; they all listened with rapt attention to the short speech made to them by one of the Italian delegates — and as he told them of the struggle of the peoples for peace and happiness (he had spent 17 years in Mussolini's prisons himself) one could see the tears in their eyes.

Back at School

Last week I had a perfect little letter from a girl in Goerlitz — a Young Pioneer from this camp — happy to be at school, and working hard there, but still remembering the camp and its international contacts with obvious enthusiasm. My own memories of the whole tour of Saxony are similarly lighted up by the friends made, by the contacts with the life of the German Democratic Republic, and by the conviction that here are people making very great efforts for the good of their own country and for peace between the nations.

BERLIN NOTEBOOK

By John Peet

On February 13th, in "Berlin Notebook" we described how easy it was for Herr Schulz of Leipzig to come to East Berlin, take a ticket on the elevated railway, and ride to West Berlin.

Mr. Gaston Coblentz, Bonn correspondent of the "New York Herald Tribune", seems to read GERMAN REPORT attentively.

He apparently said to himself "If it is as simple as all that, then it's a story, because all the American papers have been writing for years about how difficult it was."

Sensational

His editors agreed with him that it was a sensational story, for they spread it over three columns of the front page of the European edition of "Herald Tribune" on February 28th.

Mr. Coblentz's story is very appealing in its naivety, so here is a good long extract. The text is just as he wrote it, except for the bits in brackets in italics, which are my comments:

"Berlin, Feb. 27. — A trip over the elevated train escape route from East to West Berlin . . . is still as simple as riding the rapid transit system in New York.

"This reporter traveled the elevated train escape channel Westwards to-day from a point three miles deep in the Eastern part of the city. No one on the train, or standing on West-bound station platforms, was being interrogated by the ubiquitous People's Police . . .

No Questions

"In order to enter the elevated platform to go West, you buy a ticket for 20 pfennigs. No questions are asked. Then you present this ticket at a check point at the platform entrance. Still no questions are asked. The ticket procedure is part of normal practice everywhere in Berlin.

"Nor are any questions asked when railway passengers coming in from East Germany leave the railway platform to change over to the elevated train. The only man who seemed to be doing anything by way of checking was a heavy-set Russian soldier with a tommy-gun.

"He rushed from one elevated train to another as they arrived, and stood by the door as the passengers poured out or in. But he did not speak to anyone. When there was no train on hand, he paced up and down energetically."

(You can just picture Mr. Coblentz's disappointment. The Soviet soldier did not shoot people ruthlessly, he did not whip them, he did not even speak to them. He was, in fact, just an ordinary military police patrol, watching for soldiers out without a pass, acting much like a military policeman in a rail junction anywhere else in the world.)

"From the East Station, the elevated proceeds west over the sea of incredible ruins that covers all parts of Berlin. The passengers are silent, and those among them who are refugees are indistinguishable from the others. Nobody carries anything larger than a brief-case or a very small valise. There is practically no conversation in the train.

(Mr. Coblentz's x-ray eyes have apparently discovered that some of his fellow-passengers are refugees. The remark about conversation puzzles me. I don't know what it is like on the New York El, but on London's Underground Railway there is also practically no conversation, as far as I can remember.)

"Friedrichstrasse is the last stop before West Berlin. The Western sanctuary is only a few hundred yards away. Nobody's face changes . . . Then the train pulls out.

"In less than three minutes it glides into the Lehrter Station, the first Western stop. Few people get out. It is still hard to detect any change of expression in the passengers' faces."

(And so on. The whole story is too long, but we can reveal that Mr. Coblentz never does get to the point where he could discern any change in those impassive faces. You see, the overwhelming majority of people on the train are just ordinary people riding on the public transport system of Berlin as they have done all their lives. Their faces don't change between Friedrichstrasse Station and the Lehrter Station, any more than the faces change in the London Underground between Charing Cross and Leicester Square, or in New York's subway between Times Square and Seventh Avenue West.

Well Poisoned

Nobody would even expect them to, of course, except someone thoroughly poisoned by a diet of stories in the press of the western world about secret police, oppression, and hair-breadth escapes.

Mr. Coblentz's story is a fine example of the fact that western journalists, working in the phoney atmosphere of West Berlin, Bonn, and other places, get infected by the very lies they write, and begin to believe them themselves.)

Go Home!

Just to stay on the railway topic, here is the latest crack from West Germany. A man was standing around the railway station at Frankfurt/Main, in West Germany, one of the main centres for the U. S. Occupation Forces, watching the trains pull out.

After a few hours, police moved him on for loitering, but he drifted back again.

The police picked him up, put him in a cell overnight, and then let him loose. Back to the station he went.

Finally a cop asked him what it was all about.

"I just love watching the Americans getting into trains and going away" he said.

Tut, Tut, Mr. Nutting

"The German forces (being raised in West Germany) will of course contain no German Luftwaffe"

H. A. Nutting, Foreign Under-Secretary, in the British House of Commons, February 11th 1953.

"Bonn, March 2, German Press Agency — The organisational preparations for the formation of a German Luftwaffe are practically complete, a spokesman of the Blank Office (West German War Ministry, ed.) stated. The Federal Republic will be equipped with 1326 planes and will be 80,000 strong."

Edited and published fortnightly by John Peet, Democratic German Report, Friedrichstrasse 167/III Berlin W 8, Telephone: 22 62 68. Printed in Germany by (36). Veröffentlicht unter der Lizenz-Nr. 752